



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

TRANSMISSION BUSINESS LINE

August 14, 2001

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: People Interested in the McNary-John Day Transmission Line Project

In May, Bonneville Power Administration (Bonneville) wrote to tell you about a proposed new 75-mile-long transmission line that could affect you. We asked for your comments on the project and had two public meetings. Response was great; we received over 300 comments on the proposal. Thank you for taking the time to tell us your ideas.

This letter briefly summarizes those comments, outlines our next steps, and tells where to call if you have questions.

The proposal is the same - BPA is proposing to construct a transmission line from the McNary Substation to the John Day Substation, a distance of about 75 miles (see enclosed map). The new 500-kilovolt (kV) line would begin at the existing McNary Substation in Umatilla County, Oregon, cross the Columbia River into Washington, and generally follow the River west through Benton and Klickitat counties. At the John Day Dam, the proposed line would cross back into Oregon and connect into the John Day Substation in Sherman County.

The proposed line would, for its entire distance, parallel existing transmission lines that run between McNary and John Day Substations. BPA has existing right-of-way available next to those lines for most of the distance. The new line would be in this available right-of-way wherever possible. The proposed line would use lattice steel structures that are about 145 feet tall.

The existing lines in this area are operating at capacity. With the power shortage that the Northwest is experiencing, many new generation facilities are being considered. The McNary-John Day line would help ensure that the newly generated power could move through the system.

Public Comments – In May and June Bonneville received 350 comments on this proposed new transmission line. Most of the comments (78%) were given at the public meetings held in late May. One meeting was in Paterson and one in Roosevelt. We also received comments by mail, e-mail, and with permission-to-enter forms.

Most of the comments (45%) focused on potential impacts of the new line. The three topics that drew the most comments about impacts were:

- ◆ landuse (going through orchards and vineyards, cattle grazing, etc.),
- ◆ vegetation (mostly noxious weed concerns, some clearing concerns), and
- ◆ fire (concerns about workers starting brush fires).

Other impact comments were on cultural resources, social impacts, economic, noise, public health and safety, soils, visual, water and wildlife.

We also received many comments or questions on why we need to build the line, alternatives to building the line, where the line would go and what would it look like.

If you would like to see all the comments we received, you can visit our website at www.efw.bpa.gov under *environmental planning/analysis*. If you would like us to send you a copy of the comments, please call our toll-free document request line at 1-800-622-4520, and leave a message (please include the name of this project and your complete mailing address).

Next Steps – We are analyzing the possible environmental impacts of the project. Your comments are helping us know where to focus our efforts. The information that we gather will be published in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement that will be available for review and comment early next year.

You will continue to see crews working along the line through the following months. To address some of the noxious weed concerns, we will be conducting a weed survey along the right-of-way. This will help us know if follow-up with treatments will be necessary after there are no more activities in the field. We have also asked all of our crews to take strict fire prevention measures and to carry fire suppression equipment in their vehicles.

Once we have completed the environmental review, Bonneville will decide whether and how to proceed with the project. If Bonneville decides to proceed, construction would likely begin in 2003.

For More Information - If you have any questions about this proposal, please call me toll-free at 1-800-282-3713, at my direct number, (503) 230-5525; or send an e-mail to lcdriessen@bpa.gov.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

Lou Driessen 08-10-2001
 Lou Driessen
 Project Manager

1 Enclosure:
 Map